674 like ours except that patches of blood made violent interruptions on the
764 chaste red and white striped design, being slung on a pole, carrying a
795 woman who had been hacked by the dah of a hot-tempered husband. When one of the villagers had died a sudden death through poisoning, we listened wide-eyed to Ma Aye Shwe's account of his burial. All the old and broken bottles of Ye had been collected and ground up. His grave was dug, and after the coffin had been put into it, was filled up with alternating layers of earth and of powdered glass. This was because one of our persisting animist beliefs is that a spirit whose body dies a "green" death, that is, sudden, violent and unnatural, will walk about the earth in the form of an undesirable ghost, and hence the glass which will keep it under the earth and prevent its escape, much as thieves are deterred from climbing a wall which has powdered glass strewn along its top.

731 Every few years also, the water of the Ye creek rose so high that the ground and main floors of all the houses were flooded, and my grandmother and aunts had to retreat with all perishable goods and furniture to the high reaches of the platform storey and camp there till the water retreated. How we longed to visit Ye when this happened, but the nearest we came to realizing these floods was to see unexpected little patches of the sand of the creek every now and again in the houses, where the traces of the visiting waters had not been swept away. In one really bad year the waters at chaung-bya swelled into a mountainous flood which rose suddenly in a great roar and carried with it huts and rafts and stored
[772] goods of all kinds. Grandmother and my great-aunts watched dumbly from the top of the pagoda hill, while cocks and hens and dogs and people clung to the thatched roofs of the floating houses, the cocks crowing and dogs baying and people praying, all rushing swiftly and inevitably past Ye, towards the great Thamoddhaya, the great ocean which is part of the waters which break the girdle of the Settkyawala Mountains circling the world around Myinmo Mount. Every few years, as a matter of fact, Uncle Thet Hnan, who had a garden and house at chaung-bya, lost a few tins of sesamum oil, or some part of his bamboo structures. This was because they all built and rebuilt the houses too near the water, to provide a quick escape from dacoits and enemies.

674 It was a dangerous life in these gardens even during our most recent years there, and my cousin Nyein Maung who was the stalwart to give my aunts most protection, developed into a rough and ready dispenser of justice. On one occasion he watched the hand of a thief creep up through the bamboo slathes of the flooring on which his little son played. The child wore a gold anklet which the hand coming out of the darkness tried to wrench off. Nyein Maung who anticipated that

584 family made it necessary to arrange things in a traditional manner. My brother had chosen his bride from a family of sisters who had been to school with us and with whom we were on the friendliest terms, so that he could have pressed his own suit if he wished, but since my sister-in-law's family also stood for tradition, we had to go through elaborate negotiations.

For a go-between we chose a lady who belonged to high circles of Rangoon society and who was known to be a great friend of the girl's family. One morning my mother and I paid her a formal call and made the proposal. my mother reciting the list of her son's qualifications which the lady already knew quite well. She promised to approach the guardian aunt of the girl's family. Shortly after this, we called on the aunt, who demurred, not to seem eager, and said, moreover, that she could not give an answer until she had consulted an astrologer to see whether the stars of the young man and woman formed an auspicious union. We thereupon gave her the date and hour of my brother's birth. During all this time, no word had passed between my future sister-in-law and us upon the matter; we did not, in fact, visit her. In due course, the aunt gave her answer, and while my brother was out of town on a tour, a party was held at the girl's house, with the senior relatives of both sides present to formalize the engagement. No unmarried young girls should attend this, out of modesty, and although I went along as my mother's right-hand, I had to closet myself in the bedroom with the girls. It was only then, when the elders were formalizing the engagement, that my sister-in-law did not feel it forward to talk about the wedding and future happiness with much excitement. After the engagement had been announced, my brother was allowed to call every day during the three months of their engagement, but they were not allowed to be seen together in public.

177. 19 764 775 Meanwhile, great preparations went on, for besides the social arrangements attendant on all weddings, the attire of the bride and bridegroom had to be matched in colour, a panegyric writer had to be found to write the poem of praise, and suitable elders to perform the ceremony had to be agreed upon. The modern Burmese custom is to ask the most respected highly placed Burmese couple among the family's friends, along with an equally respected English official to pronounce recognition in English. (This learning of English by a vast number of Burmans, and their daily activities in that language, have led to much duplication of effort in the disposal of their spirits also. When a person is buried, a notice is served on his spirit that this body is now to be vacated, and the spirit to go elsewhere for fear that the faithful spirit hovering round the grave may create a ta-say, a ghost. When a student died in term time at the University, the rites at her funeral were completed only when a

lecturer went to the head of the grave and said in English: "So-and-so, I give you notice that you are no longer in the Jr. B. A. class." When U Tin Gyi died during an official visit to England, we held his cremation at Golders Green and succeeded in getting a Singhalese hpongyi from the Buddhist Lodge in London to perform the rites. In spite of the environment of the crematorium we felt that we had achieved a dim and religious Buddhist atmosphere, such as he would have wished, by the time the hpongyi had intoned the verses, with all the gathered Burmese students repeating them phrase by phrase. But suddenly one of the English officers present got up and read in English: "U Tin Gyi, O.B.E., Registrar for Co-operative Societies in the Government of Burma, I give you leave to relinquish your post in the service of the Government. Signed—Adams." As if the persistent ghost might return to haunt in English, having been dismissed in only one of his two languages.)

Mr. Bernard Swithinbank of the I.C.S. had, through long years of friendship for Burmese people, laid the hands of many young couples one upon the other in marriage, and in this case he seemed particularly fitted for the task, for twenty-five years before he had married the parents of the bride, and though he could not perform for the bridegroom's parents their marriage ceremony which was held in Grandfather's time, it was he who gave my father leave to go to Thaton, as senior officer wishing him all prosperity in his marriage.

At last the great day arrived and all the male cousins and uncles collected at our house to dress the bridegroom with as much fuss as attends a bride in any other country. My mother had bought three pink silk turbans varying barely perceptibly in shade, so that the young man's complexion might be matched exactly when the fateful hour approached. My two young sisters and I took one each and sewed the finest possible seams, but submitting every inch as we went long to the scrutiny of my senior uncle Kyaw Din who said that a man's turban needed finer sewing than any woman's garment. My *Ko Lay*, most debonair of the cousins, tied the turban on my brother's head, while the band of elder brothers-once-removed stood around and complained that he did not make the floating end dance and toss with sufficient sprightliness. Two uncles and two cousins combined to tie his pasoe, the magnificent skirt which had been brought down from Mandalay and matched in the weaving with the bride's own skirt. My brother submitted to all of this with a meekness born of never having worn full Burmese dress before. All the while my three sisters danced around to look at him from every angle, exclaiming with sauciness and delight how beautiful and pink he looked, for my brother was really a robust and dark-skinned type of man who liked to wear sober English clothes.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

517 silks for their wives. The ordinary explanation is that every one can see what clothes you wear, while few people care to come and spy out what kind of a house you live in, and how you fare. But there can be very little doubt that the real reason is a survival of the idea of the old Yāzagaing, as well as the fact that long years of custom have impressed upon everybody the opinion that there are only two forms of architecture, the secular and the ecclesiastical, and no one, no matter how sure he might be that the Government would take no notice of his ambition, would brave the denunciations of the religious by adding a spire to his house, or even adorning the gable ends with carved pinnacles and flamboyant finials of the monasteries. Consequently the one regular form prevails everywhere.

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342 576 The Burman's dwelling, then, is always shaped more or less like a marquee tent, and never more than one storey high, to avoid the humiliating possibility of the feet of some one being over your head. But the whole house stands on posts, so that the floor is seven or eight feet from the ground. It consists often of only one room, usually, however, of two or more, and to the front of the house there is always a verandah, three or four feet lower than the general level of the house, and as often as not quite open to the street, or the garden, or whatever may be in front and always to the sky. The posts which form the main or central part of the house are usually six in number, and all have their names, such as Uyu, Kya-hngan, Nyaung-yan. The south post, in the main part of the house, the Thabye-taing, is the best known, as being always adorned with leaves and particularly marked as that in the top of which most probably lives the nat-spirit of the house. A dead body, after being swathed, and while waiting for the coffin, is always placed by it.

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A house ought never to be built till the foundations have been thoroughly dug up and shown to a soothsayer. He will determine, from the substances found, whether it is a lucky place to build a house in or not. It stands to reason that the building cannot be commenced till a lucky day and hour have been sought out. There is considerable care to be observed in the selection of the timber. Posts are masculine, feminine, and neuter. Male posts are of equal size at both

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Burmese AP4

789 the wiles of the nats are harmless. In case of the utmost
776 need, even the ordinary tharana-gôn, the payā, tayā, thengā, is of much avail, if only uttered with faith. It is with the idea of keeping away bilus, tasés, and demons that the
[792] members of the yellow robe are often summoned to death-
[764] beds. There is no thought of the monk administering spiritual consolation to the dying man. The good influence of his pious presence keeps away evil spirits, and nothing more. No exhortations of the yahan can alter the balance of merit and demerit which is already cast up for the dying man. On the other hand, in out-of-the-way parts of the country, and especially in the hills, spirit shrines are not unseldom found actually inside a monastery compound.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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minute evidences of the owner's rank and his precedence in that rank. Anklets of gold (kyegyin) were forbidden to all children but those of the royal family on pain of death. Silk cloth, brocaded with gold or silver flowers and figures of animals, might be worn by none but the royal blood and such of the wunkadaws, the minister's wives, as received a special grace enabling them to use it. Similarly the usage as to jewels and precious stones was very carefully laid down. Very few besides the king and his kinsfolk might wear diamonds. The display of emeralds and rubies was restricted in like manner, and so on with other precious stones less esteemed by Burmans. All rubies above a certain size found in the country were the property of the king, and the hapless digger as a rule got nothing in return. His head paid the penalty if he listened to the temptings of black merchants from India, and chipped it so as to bring it under the royalty size. Kadipa panat, velvet sandals, were allowed to none but persons of royal blood. The use of hinthapada, a vermilion dye obtained from cinnabar, was very jealously guarded. The kamauk, a great wide-brimmed hat, was an honour eagerly sought after by the lower rank of officials. The institution was not very ancient, and was primarily due to a prophecy that Burma would come to be ruled by a hat-wearing people. To cut out the Englishmen, therefore, the kamauk was invented, and was looked upon as a great distinction. Hundreds more instances might be given of the yazagaing, the sumptuary rules; but the above will probably suffice to exhibit their scope and character.

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Our present Burmese subjects delight in nothing so much as in their immunity from these enactments; and perhaps the permission to bury their dead in any way they please is the most popular privilege. In Mandalay, exclusive of the ceremonial at the cremation of a monk, which is identical all over the country, five kinds of funeral were ordained by the yazagaing. First, that of the king; then of any member of the royal family. Even if one of them were executed, he was put in a red velvet bag and committed to the waters of the Irrawaddy. Third in order were the funerals of those who died in the enjoyment of ministerial office—not always a certain thing, if the recipient did not

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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die shortly after his promotion. Then came the obsequies of thutés, "rich men," people who had royal edicts conferring that title on them; and finally the rites of poor people, which were practically no rites at all. They probably would not even have been buried were it not for sanitary reasons. But now in all Burma the poorest man, if he can borrow the money, may have any honours he pleases for his dead. He may shade the catafalque with golden umbrellas, or white ones for the matter of that; he may hire elephants; he may fire guns, as long as he does not do it in the public thoroughfares; he may have any number of bands of music; he may erect a pagoda over the ashes of the deceased; he may revel in all the honours restricted by the yazagaing to the most privileged dead; and, in consequence, he may suffer in pocket as much as he dares. Further, he may heap up honorifics in his conversation and correspondence to the utmost of his desire and capability; finding infinite gratification in the fact that in former days the use of a single one of them would most assuredly have resulted in his being lodged in gaol, there to be treated according to the way in which he was able to satisfy the rapacity of his guardians. If yazagaing was unpleasant when it was in operation, the contemplation of it certainly affords an unfailing pleasure to those who are exempt from its provisions.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

825 baby curled up together in a corner with the boa, making one another mutually cosy.

[757] The gall-bladder and fat of the sabba-gyi are much prized for medicinal purposes, the fat especially being esteemed as a sovereign remedy for rheumatism and strains.

Of the poisonous snakes the most dreaded is the ngan, or u-gwet, the "spotted forehead." This creature, the hamadryad or ophiophagus, is, as his name imports, a cannibal, and lives on his neighbour snakes. Specimens as long as nine feet from nose to tail have been killed near Rangoon, and in the forests which are his proper home he sometimes grows to fourteen or fifteen feet. Unlike all other reptiles, the ngan does not get out of the way of a man approaching his haunts, but attacks him immediately. He is worse than the walrus that roused the indignation of the French poet.

Bees are kept in a good many places in the country, but it is necessary to be very careful where you put the hives. It is a most ill-omened circumstance if wild bees make a nest under the house, or if bees of any kind fly under the floor. On the other hand, a hive on the house-top is very lucky. Honey is in great request to present to the pôngyis at various feasts, and especially for the embalming of the [764] body of a dead brother of the Robe. After the cremation the honey is sold in the bazaar. It is not eaten by Englishmen in Burma. "Tapping the governor" does not commend itself to everybody. The hill tribes in the Shan States keep bees in hives made of blocks of wood.

757 Rhinoceros horns are in as great favour with the Burmans as with Chinese medical men. Shavings of the horn are considered an invaluable cure for epilepsy, and also guard against poisons of all kinds. There are two distinct species found in the eastern forests—the single and the double-horned.

315 787 Near Yenangyaung, in the petroleum district, when a new oil-well is wanted, the workmen place a marble image of an elephant on a smooth, flat stone, and surround it with gifts of all kinds, and then sit down to watch. If the elephant itself moves it indicates the direction in which borings are to be made; if not, the offering on which its shadow first falls as the sun sinks down, is marked, and a bedin sayā consulted.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER LXIII

A PÔNGYI BYAN

THE veneration and respect which meet the yahan all through his life are extended to his remains when he dies, or rather when he leaves this world. The monk does not "die" as a common layman does, he does not even, like the king, "ascend to the nat-dêwas' village." The holy man in his last existence must have been holy in order to have accumulated the sum of merits which enabled him upon earth to remain steadfast in the sacred order. When he passes away, he "returns" to the highest heavens of nats, or to the meditative states of zān, or perhaps even to the pure and immaterial realms of arupa. Therefore a mendicant's funeral is called a pôngyi byan —the return of the great glory. Even a junior member is burnt with great solemnity and state; but when a distinguished brother dies, one famous for his learning, his austerity, or the great number of Lents he has spent in the cloister, the obsequies swell into a ceremonial which attracts people from all parts of the country.

As soon as life leaves the body, the corpse is carefully washed in the usual way by the dead pôngyi's chief supporters and some of the monastic scholars. Then the intestines are taken out and buried in a quiet corner of the monastery grounds, or near the pagoda. The cavity of the stomach is then filled up with hot ashes, sawdust, a few spices, and whatever other available substances may be presumed likely to dry up the humours, and then the skin is sewed together again. A layer of wax is sometimes spread all over the body, but more often it is simply tightly swathed in white cloth from head to foot. This linen cloth is then

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 varnished over with wood oil, so that every particle of the
764 corpse may, if necessary, be covered with gold leaf, and this, except in very poor neighbourhoods, is always done. Where there is not money enough, the yellow sacred garments are wrapped round the corpse instead. The arms are always folded on the chest. The body is then placed in the coffin. This is not, as is the case with laymen, made of planks, but of a single log roughly hollowed out, and with a very substantial lid. This lid is not fastened down for a considerable time, and occasionally a bamboo pipe leads from the coffin into the ground to assist in drying up the embalmed body. The fastening down of the cover is sometimes rather an unpleasant spectacle. Many of the old pôngyis keep logs in their monasteries to serve for their coffins, and these, when hollowed out, are not always a satisfactory fit. Bishop Bigandet tells of a horrible sight he witnessed, when the lid had to be crushed on with wedges and the blows of a heavy mallet. The majority of aged yahans are, however, so shrivelled and shrunken before they die, that such an occurrence, which, it must not be supposed, is any less dreadful to a Burman than it is to an Englishman, could only happen very rarely, and then probably would not be carried out in the way which so justly shocked the good bishop.

The inner coffin is then, like the body, varnished with thitsi, and gilt all over. For it is prepared an outer casket called a payaung-bông, which is as magnificent as the skill of the local artificers and the liberality of the "benefactors" permit. This sarcophagus is often very large, and is richly [531] gilt and painted in the panels, which are fringed with the usual mosaic of bits of mirror, coloured glass, and zinc. The paintings naturally represent religious subjects, usually scenes from the life of Shin Gautama; his famous meetings with the old man, the sick, the dead, and the monk; his departure at night from the magnificent court of King Thudawdana; his ascent to Tawadeintha, and the like. Rearing itself over the top of the sarcophagus is usually the figure of a nagā, recalling the pious dragon chief that sheltered the Lord Buddha from a flood of rain by coiling seven times round his body and expanding its hood as a covering.

Meanwhile, money is being steadily collected for the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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remainder of the rites, and as this comes in from the elders of the surrounding villages and the kappiyadayakas of neighbouring religious houses, the kyaungthagyi of the deceased's monastery sets about erecting an edifice like a thein, a "monastery of the dead." This is a building, more or less substantial, according to the sanctity of the departed, built of teak, and open all round, with the tapering ecclesiastical pya-that rising over it. Hither the coffin, with the sarcophagus, is carried and deposited on a dais in the centre, a slight railing serving to keep off wild animals. Over it a large white umbrella, with a deep paper-lace fringe, is fixed, and round about hang a number of paintings, similar to those on the payaung-bông, some of them, however, representing the favourite subject of the different races of men as known to the artist—the swarthy Hindoo, the oblique-eyed Chinaman, the Kachin with his pig on his back, and the ghastly white-faced Englishman with dog and gun. Others are simply grotesque, and a few horrible, in their delineations of the horrors of hell. Nevertheless, they are all allowed to hang there, for though it is expressly stated that paintings are among the five species of gifts which are not meritorious (dancing is another), the ordinary layman thinks that the painting he gives must certainly be an exception. Here and there in this odd kind of mortuary chapel are also keinnaya, gay tinselled pasteboard figures of men with birds' lower extremities, manôttha keinnaya and nat keinnaya, the latter having the wings and gorgeous aspect of nat-dêwas. Here the body lies in state, and there is a constant stream of pilgrims—some of them from far distant parts of the country—who come to say their religious sentences, make offerings of flowers and fruit as they would at the pagoda, and contribute what they can afford towards the remainder of the ceremony.

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The body remains till the required sum is collected. During that time numbers of festivals are celebrated at the ne'ban kyaung; bands of music play frequently, and the same people often make three or four different offerings. The lying in state usually lasts several months, sometimes considerably over a year, and it is to be noted that a pôngyi byan never takes place during Lent.

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2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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At last all the funds are collected. An open space outside the town is cleared of jungle, and in the centre of it is erected the funeral pyre. This is constructed of bamboo matting, pasteboard brightly painted, and covered with the usual tinsel. It is, of course, in the form of the seven-roofed spire, the number of roofs, as some think, representing the number of heavens of nat-dêwas. It is square up to a height of fifteen or twenty feet, where there is a platform, on which is placed a sort of cenotaph, resembling the payaung bông in construction and decoration. Above this towers up, fifty or sixty feet higher, the bamboo canopy. When this is ready, a fortunate day is selected by the elders of the town, for they have the management of the funeral rites, to the exclusion of the brethren of the yellow robe. This is announced all over the country-side by sound of gong, and when the appointed day arrives the people come flocking from every side, each quarter or village bringing its pya-thats and padetha-bins, the former similar in construction to the spire on the funeral pile, the "wishing trees" laden with a-hlu for the surviving brethren of the pôngyi who is to be cremated. The spires are arranged round about the great central one, to be burnt along with it; the padetha-bins are delivered at the kyaung.

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There is always a great gathering round the monastery of the dead, where the sramana has been lying in state. The coffin is taken down with great ceremony, and placed on a strongly built, low four-wheeled car, surmounted by the eternal bamboo spire. Now comes a part of the ceremonial which always seems strangely absurd, not to say indecorous, to foreigners. Two, or sometimes four, stout rattan or coir ropes are fastened to the car, and forthwith all the able-bodied men present commence a frantically contested and uproarious tug-of-war. No sides whatever are selected, or numbers agreed upon. Reinforcements are always ready to back up a side which seems on the point of losing, and prematurely ending the struggle; and when a man loses his wind he leaves go his hold and sits down to have a rest. Sometimes the rope breaks, and then the progress of the funeral has to be suspended till a new one is procured and fastened on, for there is no rule as to a side abiding by its accidents. Sometimes the contest goes on for two or three

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

hours, and there are instances recorded where it was not till the third day that a definite result was arrived at. The explanation is simple enough to a Burman, and it is surprising that it has not hitherto been given by any writer on Burma. It is a work of the greatest possible merit to drag a pôngyi's body to the funeral pyre, and this kutho falls to the share of those who win in the tug-of-war. The late Captain Forbes said that the explanation was that "the conquering village will get the better of their losing rivals in all sports, contests, or other matters during the year." But this is impossible where the winning side may be composed of men from a score of different villages in circles remote from one another. Besides, there are no championship meetings in Burma. It is to be noted also that during the lônswèthi it is usually only the payaung bông that is on the car. The actual coffin is brought down afterwards.

At last the coffin is brought to the pyre and hoisted up to its lofty platform, beneath which is stored a great quantity of combustible material: wood soaked in oil, pitch, and abundance of scented chips. Then nothing remains but to light it. When a layman is burnt, fire is set to the pile by the nearest relations with a box of Bryant and May's matches. But this is much too worldly a method for a member of the Thenga, and even the fire obtained by the friction of a plug in a hollow bamboo—an ingenious amplification of the two dry sticks of a variety of barbarous tribes, common in most monasteries—would fail to satisfy the dignity of a pôngyi. The pyre is lighted by rockets fired from a distance. Scores of these dôn have been prepared weeks beforehand, and many have been carried round triumphantly in procession by the people who have made them, a band of music preceding, and young men and girls dancing and singing of the potency of the powder and the accuracy of the aim which will gain for them the glory of setting fire to the pyre. Each rocket has a figure of some kind, a nat-dêwa, a tiger, a hare, or a bilu attached to it. Some of them are of huge size, constructed of the stems of trees hollowed out and crammed full of combustibles, in which sulphur largely predominates. Many are eight or nine feet long and four or five in circumference, and secured

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

764 792 389 by iron hoops and rattan lashings. Up in Mandalay some are very much larger. These are let off at the funeral pile from a distance of forty or fifty yards, the largest being mounted on go-carts, and many others guided by a rope fastened to the pya-that, the rocket sliding along by means of twisted cane loops. The great majority fail to have any other effect than making a great splutter and poisoning the air. A few refuse to budge at all; others topple off their carts and fizzle erratically on the grass. A pôngyi byan in the old days was frequently attended with loss of life. Some one, at any rate, of the bigger rockets was sure to fly off at a tangent and plunge into the crowd, where its weight, to say nothing of its fiery belchings, found one or more victims. Even now it is only by the strictest police regulations and a rigorous maintaining of order among the spectators, and system in the pyrotechnists, that like catastrophes do not happen. At last some lucky dôn plunges right into the inflammable materials piled below the bier, and in a few minutes the flames are leaping high above the topmost pinnacle of the spire. Roof after roof falls, setting fire to the offerings placed round the basement. The joints of bamboo explode with a noise like a pistol shot; the crowd cheer each separate occurrence, and when finally the central spire falls with a hiss, a shout rises from the multitude which suggests anything but death and pious observance. But here [761] in the manôtthapyi all is changeful, sad, and unreal, and one more death brings but nearer to the final rest of Ne'ban.

When the last smouldering embers have cooled, the monastic brethren search for any pieces of bones that may remain, and these are carefully gathered up and buried somewhere near the pagoda. Sometimes, in the case of a particularly saintly man, they are pounded down, mixed into a paste with thitsi, and moulded into an image of the Buddha, which is stored up in the monastery. The custom followed in other Buddhist countries of erecting a shrine over the dead is, in accordance with the teachings of Shin Gautama, an honour but rarely accorded in Burma. In the Shan States they are commoner, but are rarely anything more elaborate than a stucco-covered block of bricks, about three feet high and pointed at the top.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER LXIV

DEATH AND BURIAL

WHEN a Burman dies, after the first interval of poignant grief on the part of those present, the body is carried to the side of the central room of the house, abutting on the front verandah, and there deposited between the house posts. Messages are then sent to the monastery, to the friends and neighbours, and a funeral band is summoned. Meanwhile the corpse is carefully washed from head to foot, and the two big toes, and usually also the thumbs, are tied together with the chema-gyo and the letma gyo, which, if practicable, should be locks of the hair of a son or daughter; but if this is not to be got, a strip of cotton cloth is used. The whole body then, from the armpits downwards, is closely swathed in new white cotton cloth, and when this is done the best clothes the deceased possessed are put on. If the family is wealthy the paso or tamein is often very rich and costly. The face is always left uncovered, unless there are special reasons for concealing it, arising from the cause of death. Between the teeth is placed the kado-ka, a piece of gold or silver as ferry-money to pay for the passage of the mystic river, which is known to exist, but concerning which no further particulars are to be got from any Burman. It is no doubt a relic of old demon-worship, the meaning of which is forgotten, while the custom has clung on. Charon's toll of course immediately occurs to the classical reader. Probably the race on their march from their ancestral home to Burma had to cross a big river. If the family is very poor, a copper or lead coin is used, or perhaps nothing more valuable than a betel-nut. The coin, whatever it is, is usually quietly

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2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

764 carried off by the grave-diggers. None but an outcast would venture to do such a thing.

By this time, or, if the death occurred at night, in the early morning, the band has arrived, and commences to play dirges in front of the house. The Sula-gandi monks greatly disapprove of this practice, as savouring of ostentation, and their followers therefore often dispense with the band, as do many Burmans in the large English towns. But otherwise the band is always engaged, and plays on steadily till the funeral takes place. Almost invariably, too, one or more of
[793] the yahans from the monastery come along and stay in the house, their presence being invaluable in keeping away evil spirits, who might otherwise loiter about the place. The monk may or may not deliver a discourse, just as he sees fit. The body is then put into the coffin, which is a very flimsy kind of affair, ordinarily made of let-pan (*Bombax malabaricum*), a very light and porous kind of wood not unlike deal, or sometimes of eng tree (*Dipterocarpus tuberculatus*). This is fastened down roughly with any kind of nails that come to hand. A number of the relatives and friends now come to condole and lend their assistance in making and ornamenting the bier and hearse, most of them bringing presents
[476] of money or food with them. A few years ago a very meritorious society called Upathaka was started in Rangoon, the object of which was to provide decent and honourable burial for all members. The actual society did not last very long, but it served to show that the old feeling of mutual help still existed. At no time, however, have the Burmans been backward in this meitswe a-paung a-paw, which is one of the thirty-eight points insisted on in the Mingala-thut, the most favourite sermon of the Lord Buddha's. Friends and neighbours troop in with presents of a few pice, baskets of rice, meat, fruit, tobacco, betel, and material for decorating the bier, so that a man who in his lifetime never had a rupee to bless himself with, receives in Lower Burma a funeral grand enough to bring everybody connected with it under the scope of the sumptuary laws, if it were held in King Thibaw's territory.

The body is kept a longer or shorter time according to the station of the deceased. If he was rich, the preparation

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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of the funeral paraphernalia takes some time, and it is nowadays almost a matter of ceremonial necessity that all children and blood relations should assemble for the burial. Technically, if the death occurred on the last day of the month the funeral ceremonies should take place before midnight, certainly before the new moon appears. This rule, however, is far from being strictly observed nowadays. A poor man [585] is buried as quickly as possible to save expense; a rich man's obsequies last according to the pride of his family and their inclination to spend money. The coffin, called hkaung, is usually covered with tinsel paper, or perhaps gilt. The talā, the bier, is shaded by a light canopy, or spire made of bamboo, and carried by means of four long bamboo poles. This pya-that is usually most gaily decorated with coloured pasteboard, tinsel, and paintings of different kinds, and looks strangely bright and theatrical to Europeans. It is carpentered and decorated in the street before the house, for it is from eight or ten to twenty or thirty feet in height, and often overtops all the houses in the quarter.

When the day fixed for the funeral arrives the yahans [793] are invited to the house. They usually come in numbers proportioned to the amount of alms given. There is ordinarily an address in the house, dwelling mainly on the vanity of human wishes and the uncertainty and misery of life on earth. Then the coffin is brought out and placed on the 764 platform made for it in the lower part of the pya-that. 585 Over it is then thrown a paso if the deceased was a man, or 178 a tamein or neckerchief if a woman. This usually conceals the coffin, unless it is richly gilt, or painted, as is sometimes the case, with figures of the nobler of the animals, such as lions, tigers, monkeys, and elephants. Then the distinctive garment is looped up so that all may see. Over this cloth are usually placed short sticks wrapped round with gold and silver paper, shwe bidôn and ngwe bidôn which were forbidden in Mandalay except to the officials. Equally contrary to the Yazagaing are the sanda ya-mya, two long streamers which come down from the top of the spire and are taken in the hands of as many of the personal friends as can get hold of them. The musket shots which are fired often during the processions would have entailed especially

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

heavy punishment under Burman rule. Latterly some laymen in Rangoon have even been bold enough to glorify the funerals of their relatives with keinnaya, figures of men or women with bird-like feet and lower extremities. These spangled toys, which are commonly to be seen in all monasteries, are properly only used at the last ceremonies of a member of the sacred order. But when some men are bold enough even to flaunt the royal white umbrella, it is hardly to be expected that the distinctive honours of the yahans would be respected.

The procession having been formed, a start is made. At the head come the alms intended for the monks and for the poor, some carried by men, some by women, the sexes going in separate lines. After this come the pyin-sin, never in any very great numbers, unless the a-hlu be particularly bountiful. Following them comes the band, and often a troop of singers. These are always hired for the purpose, and their callousness is as little to be cast up against Burman natural affection as the unlovable doings of the mutes at an English funeral. Close upon the musicians comes the bier carried by six or eight young men. Then in a general crowd follow the relations, friends, and neighbours, all on foot. Many passers-by, total strangers, join in the procession from motives of piety. Here and there the men carrying the bier stop and dance in a curious fantastic way to the measures of the dirge of the singers. The funeral *misereres* are usually the composition of an improvisatore in the chorus, and deal with the life and death and good actions of the deceased. A measure called maung pyaung is the most generally used.

Occasionally there is a tug-of-war with a rope as at a pôngyi's funeral, one side exclaiming, "We must bury our dead"; the other, "You shall not take away my friend." As a matter of necessity the former party must conquer, but they sometimes have to get recruits from the crowd before they can manage it.

It is a matter of regulation that a funeral should never go to the north or to the east. The graveyard is usually to the west of the village, and the dead should all be carried out of a walled town by a gate reserved for this purpose. In Mandalay this a-mingala tagā was that to the south-west,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

and it was avoided by those who had business in the myo as cursed, as indeed its name imports. Other rules are that a corpse must never be carried towards the centre of the town, still less can it be taken into it. If the man has died in the jungle, and the funeral has to pass a village, it skirts round the outside of it.

When the cemetery is reached, the coffin is taken out and placed on the ground near the grave. The immediate mourners collect round about it; the rest of the people go to the zayats, of which there are always several at every graveyard. The music stops as soon as this place is reached. The alms are set up in order before the pôngyis, and these again intone the five secular commandments, and the ten good works, besides a long string of Pali doxologies. As soon as they have finished they leave and file off to the monastery, the a-hlu being carried after them. The chief mourner at the same time pours water slowly out of a cocoanut shell, saying, "May the deceased and all present share the merit of the offerings made and the ceremonies now proceeding." This performance, called ye-set-kya, is a regular accompaniment of all almsgiving. The idea is that the earth will bear witness where men may forget. When Shin Gautama ascended the throne under the bawdi tree, Mān-nat, the devil, claimed that it was his, because he had discovered it first, and all his mighty host shouted aloud when he called upon them as witnesses. The Lord Buddha had no witness but the earth, and to it he appealed, asking whether he had not achieved the Three Great Works of Perfection, the Ten Great Virtues, and the Five Renouncements. The earth gave testimony to this kaung-hmu with a terrible roaring and a violent earthquake, so that Mān-nat and all his legions fled in terror. Hence the pouring out of water when alms are given.

While this is going on women are walking about the zayats distributing cheroots and sweet drinks, betel, le'pet, and biscuits among the visitors. The nearest relations are carrying out the final rites. The coffin is swung three times backwards and forwards over the open grave, and then lowered in. This ceremony, called utaikthi, is looked upon as a kind of final farewell, and after each person has thrown

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

764 [564] a handful of earth the grave-diggers fill up the grave. These sandalās are outcasts, the name being probably derived from the Sanskrit term for the lowest caste of the Hindoos. It is considered a mark of respect to wait till the grave is filled in, and when this is over, there is some conversation in the zayat over the refreshments, and then all make their way home. The pya-that, bamboos, and other paraphernalia are the perquisites of the sandalās, and they usually get all the alms intended for the poor, though at a great funeral there is often much competition for the pasos, turbans, and pieces of muslin given away in alms. It is to be observed that there is no tombstone put up; nothing to mark for future years where the grave was.

764 178 Though burial is becoming common with all classes, the old method of cremation still prevails extensively in the jungle districts, and was invariable in Independent Burma when the deceased had attained considerable age. When the body is to be burned, mithingyothi, it is not necessary that the coffin lid should be fastened down, and sometimes there is no lid at all. The preparations and procession are identical with that for burial. The pyre is composed of billets of wood, laid two and two at right angles to each other, quantities of sweet-smelling woods being placed in the intervals. A few billets are placed above the coffin as well as below, and at the bottom of the funeral pile is usually an iron trough into which any unconsumed bones may fall. The pyre is kindled at various points by the nearest relations, and the sandalās stay by to see that it burns freely, and that all is consumed. When the fire has burnt out, two or three of the nearest of kin come and search about among the ashes for the bones. These are washed clean with cocoanut milk, and in the case of great people in Lower Burma of late years, often with lavender water, eau de cologne, or any of Atkinson's or Piesse and Lubin's scents. They are then wrapped up in clean white cloths, and placed in a newly made earthenware pot, which is not uncommonly gilt, or covered with pictures of sacred events taken from the birth stories. This is then taken back to the house temporarily.

For seven days after either kind of funeral, mourning

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

For seven days after either kind of funeral, mourning goes on in the house. This means in wealthy houses indiscriminate eating and drinking. Cooking goes on all night, and all day relays of condoling visitors come and eat and enjoy themselves. The yahans also come every morning and receive offerings, and recite a string of Pali sentences. Friends bring contributions towards all this expenditure, but the result of it too often is that the heir finds that not only are all his father's hoarded rupees gone, but he himself has contracted a very considerable burden of debt. Even in the case of poor people, where the feasting is limited to the seventh day, great expense is incurred. The yahans are as necessary then as at the funeral, for the house must be purified, and the evil spirits who may be hanging about, as well as the leip-bya of the deceased, have to be exorcised and driven away. Then the pot containing the bones, if the dead person was burnt, is taken to the graveyard and buried, or sometimes is put into a hole near the pagoda. Superstitious people at burials sometimes affirm that they have caught the "butterfly" of the deceased in a handkerchief, and take this home to the house, where it lies till the seventh day, when it is opened after the discourse of the yahans, and the leip-bya is driven from the house. It can then give no more trouble.

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Sometimes a small pagoda is erected over the cremated ashes of a highly respected relative. These are regarded simply as monuments, even when they are over a king, to whom alone of laymen in Native Burma they could be erected. They must not be used as places to offer worship, and that this may be known, the members of the sacred order ordain that such pagodas shall have no hti, no umbrella, on the top. To obviate this it is usual with the builder to dedicate the place to Shin Gautama, and thus at once secure a monument and a hti. Pagodas erected in honour of yahandas, or particularly sainted pôngyis, receive the umbrella of right, and are places very eminently suited for the pious laymen to worship at. Such temple tombs are called ayo sedi, but are not of such frequent erection as they used to be.

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In some cases the relations grind down the bones to powder, and mixing this with the wood oil called thitsi,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

mould the paste into a small image of the Lord Buddha, which they set up in an honoured place in their houses, and make use of as the object of their morning and evening doxologies. Such images are called tha-yo.

Nowadays money and public estimation alone determine the character of the funeral; but formerly in Mandalay, apart from the ceremonial provided for a pôngyi byan, there were five kinds suitable for a layman—one for the sovereign; then for members of the royal family; thirdly, for nobles, and those who had received official rank, a rather precarious and dangerous possession; then for thuté, rich men—so designated by special patent, which placed them under the "protection" of the court, that is to say, made them accessible for the demand of "benevolences"; and finally, a funeral for ordinary people. The burials of the poor in Mandalay were gruesome spectacles. The body was carried to the graveyard in a big, roomy box, grown rickety with much use, or, more simply still, in a mat. The sandalās had dug a hole, little more than three feet deep. If it was not long enough the body was squeezed in without any regard for relatives feelings. Enough earth to cover it slightly was thrown on by the grave-diggers, and the howls and fights of the pariah dogs at night suggested how it was that epidemics did not arise.

In the case of the funeral, say of an Atwinwun's wife, the coffin might be gilt, with a web of white cotton cloth fastened at the head—velvet was only permissible for a person of royal blood; the bamboos composing the bier were covered with red cloth; the pasos, tameins, and so on, given in alms, were carried on long poles, each pole borne by two men. In the procession the insignia of the wun, his umbrellas, fans, kamauk, and the rest were carried in front; after the alms and yahans came a dozen or more young women, carrying the court dress and decorations of the deceased, then her state carriage and that of her husband, hers being usually a palanquin. The billets of wood on the funeral pyre were gilt. These honours were so greatly valued that not a single privilege would be omitted, though the husband had to borrow money for every single item. Indeed, were he to have omitted any of them, he might

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

be in danger of losing all, as not sufficiently appreciating the dignities conferred upon him.

As soon as Mindôn Min died, or at least as soon as it was officially made known that he was dead (for there are great doubts as to whether he died on the 12th September or on the 1st October 1878, or on some date between these two), as soon as the ministerial announcement came out on the latter date, the bo-ho, the great drum and gong suspended in a tower by the eastern gate, were stopped. The new king's drum and gong were not sounded till nine o'clock in the evening of the funeral, after which they were struck in the ordinary way every three hours. Bands of soldiers and police with gongs patrolled the streets all night long to see that everything was quiet. The princes had been seized and cast into prison some time before, but there was a chance that their adherents might raise disturbances on their behalf, and this precaution was kept up for some time. Meanwhile a pagoda, to serve as a mausoleum, was being run up with the greatest expedition close to the Mint, on the eastern side of the palace, in the outer enclosure, and this was finished in four or five days. The king had specially requested that his body should not be burnt according to ordinary royal custom, and the Sinbyumè, the senior queen and chief mourner, had resolved that this wish should be respected.

The corpse was laid out in state, and on the 3rd October the greater number of the foreigners and the officials of inferior rank were admitted to look upon it. This ceremony was conducted in the Hman-nandaw, the "Glass Palace," a room in which Thibaw Min has received most Europeans since. The body lay in the fore part of the chamber on a gilt couch, or bedstead, studded with bits of glass, and was robed from head to foot in white, a piece of white satin covering the face. The royal number of white umbrellas was canopied overhead, and at the top part of the couch were arranged the regalia in a row. On this occasion the Sinbyumè and the Anauk Nammadaw, the favourite queen of the West Palace, sat by the couch and slowly waved gorgeous peacock fans. At other times the sonless queens took it in turn to watch by the body, two at a time.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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Round about were grouped all the other queens and princesses, weeping piteously. The deceased king's brother, the ex-Pagān Min, the newly elected Thibaw Min, and all the high officials, were behind at the farther end of the room. Suspended over the corpse was a small flat piece of gold shaped like a heart, called thényun, and in this the leip-bya, the butterfly spirit of the departed king, was supposed to dwell till such time as he should be buried. The public lying in state only lasted a few hours, but the body remained there unaltered till the time of the funeral. It was not certainly known whether any attempt at embalming was made, but the body was very much shrunk, and contrasted greatly with the genial presence of his majesty when last he was seen alive.

The funeral took place on the 7th, at noon. It was the first that took place that day, and no other was allowed until the royal obsequies were entirely over. The city gates were shut and strongly guarded to prevent any such going forth if any one had been bold or ignorant enough to attempt it. From the gates of the interior palace stockade to the tomb, the whole route of the procession was laid with scarlet cloth, and round the mausoleum was a wide bamboo fence covered with long cloth, inside of which were some slight sheds, run up for the accommodation of the queens and the chief ministers. It is worthy of notice also that, in a favourable position to view all that passed, was erected a similar mandut for the accommodation of the late Mr. Shaw, then British Resident in Mandalay, his assistants, and the Residency Chaplain, the late Rev. J. A. Colbeck. The Resident and Assistant Resident were admitted in full uniform, wearing their shoes and swords, and it was thought that at length a solution of the great shoe-question had been arrived at, for though in the outer court this dignity had always been allowed them, the fact that later on they saw the king not very far off roused hopes of an audience at a remote date with similar appendages. But alas, the hopes were vain.

Punctually at twelve the procession left the palace gates. At the head of the cortège came the late king's wan, a huge palanquin borne on men's shoulders. Close upon it came

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
-Burmese AP4

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six elephants, in royal purple and gold housings, and after them two richly caparisoned ponies. Following these were three of the mingyis and a wundauk, the fourth chief minister, the Laungshwe being too old and feeble to appear. Then came the band, called byaing-daung, on such occasions, playing an ancient royal *miserere*, and after it a great crowd of the minor officials, wearing baungs, white official hats. Behind these came a number of men and women bearing the regalia and the utensils of the royal dead, the crown, the heavy court dress, the gold betel box, the spittoon, the hentha, and the rest. Then came an empty coffin, overlaid with scarlet velvet and plates of gold, and immediately behind it the body in a ta-nyin, or hammock of white velvet, attached to a bamboo swathed in red velvet, across which was thrown a white velvet covering spangled with gold. To the ta-nyin were attached two long cloths, sanda-ya-mya, held by a multitude of queens, princesses, and exceedingly young princes (all the older ones being in jail). Above were the eight white umbrellas, and over the Sinbyumè, the chief mourner, were held three of the same royal colour. Her three daughters, one of whom, the Supayalat, became Thibaw Min's queen, were shaded by bright yellow htis, a colour which ranks even over gold. Thus they proceeded to the bamboo enclosure. Then it was announced that the new king, Thibaw Min, was coming, having just received the beit-theit, been anointed by the Brahmin Pônnas. He appeared shortly, seated in a lofty wan, at each of the four corners of which crouched a maiden with bowed head and clasped hands, the whole being carried on the shoulders of forty men. Preceding him was his bodyguard of twelve pages all dressed alike and armed with double-barrelled breechloaders in red serge cases. The Shwe nan-yin payā, the new possessor of the golden throne, remained for half an hour, looking very ill at ease, and little inclined to inspect the splendid spectacle before him. Then he gave the order for the last rites, and in accordance with custom returned immediately to the palace. The actual ceremony of burial was now concluded with as little ceremony as previously there had been superabundance of it, and in a very short time the yahans, of whom there had been a great multitude

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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present, were superintending the carrying off of the 108 (representing the number of divisions in the foot of the Lord Buddha, and the beads on the rosary) heaps of alms piled up in great mountains in a long shed to the east of the mausoleum. This was the last of the pious king, Maung Lun, Mindôn Min, the Convener of the Fifth Great Synod.

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The following is the substance of a funeral dirge sung in Mandalay by a Rangoon man whose wife had died in the royal city:—

Gone, gone art thou, sweet wife; gone far away,
Fair still and harmful, stretched on thy cold bier,
As erst thou wert upon that joyous day
When first I wed thee; gladsome brought thee here,
And joyed to think that thou wert mine. Ah me!
The butterfly's silk wings are shred; no more,
Ne'er more to rest upon thy head, Mah Meit—
Sweet name for wife: "affectionate." Deplore
Her death ye nats that rule forests and streams,
The hills and vales, and greater ye who guard
The sacred law, the holy shrines, the beams
Of silent moon, and sunlight baking hard
The hot-scorched earth, not scorchèd more and seared
Than is the parchment of my tortured heart.
Nay, bear with me, good neighbours. Be not feared.
I am not mad. The nat-so hath no part
Of me or mine. The spaewife sure hath said it.

Ay, thou wert mine when last I trod the earth,
Ere yet, all sinful, I was born as man,
And yet again, in yet another birth,
I'll claim thee; when mayhap a happier kan,
A fairer sum of merit, hardly won,
Will lead us on, linked-armed, to linkèd death,
That so progressing, joyful we may run
Through all life's changes, and with single breath,
Through heavens and zân and rupa, we may bound
To Ne'ban, blissful home of rest. So mote it be.

Alas, thou wert from Hanthawaddy's plains,
And were we there, where thou so fain hadst stayed,
A stately pomp had honoured thy remains,
In silk and velvet wound, with gilded shade
Of wide umbrella's pride, and regal spire
Had towered to the skies, all seemly draped
With flowing cloths and princesses' attire,
Such as now thou dost wear, from earth escaped

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

763

Death and Funeral Observances. The decline of the human body is regarded simply as part of the inevitable course of nature. When this occurs, the soul must leave. The butterfly is the symbol of life; when one dies, 'the butterfly leaves the body.'

When death approaches, valuables, such as jewelery, are removed from the person and the death-bed, because people are reluctant to use anything with which a person dies. These things are given to the monastery. A relative chants as the person is dying, to fix his mind upon the truths of Buddhism and to divert it from worldly goods and ties of kinship.

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As soon as death occurs, everyone present cries and wails. Sometime before rigor mortis sets in, relatives bathe the corpse, using a new water pot for this purpose, and pouring the water over the body from foot to head, the opposite direction from that practiced by the living. If the water pot must be refilled at all, this must be done an odd number of times. The pot is then put outside the house, upside down, and anyone outside the family of the deceased may take it. Then another filled pot is placed underneath the bed of the corpse. His hair is dried and spread out, hanging loose. His jacket is put on backwards; his longyi is tucked in or tied at the back instead of the front. The two large toes are tied together, as are the thumbs; the arms are folded on the breast; and the body is covered with a white sheet. Money may also be placed in the mouth. This practice is sometimes attributed to the practice of earlier times when, it is said, bodies were simply abandoned; the belief is that then the deceased had to walk to the cemetery, where the grave-digger buried him and took the coins from his mouth in payment.

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The corpse must be watched at night; groups take turns at this duty. It is said that the night watch is kept to prevent malevolent spirits from stealing the body. An impending funeral may be the occasion for a pwe, an outdoor theatrical presentation, and gambling games. In such event, the proceeds from the gambling will go to the bereaved family to help them. The corpse, in a coffin, will be placed on a bier nearby the scene of the pwe. It is said that thus he does not become lonely.

Burial occurs as soon as the relatives can conveniently gather together. While the body lies in state there is open house for those who wish to come to pay their last respects. When ready for burial, the body is placed in a wooden coffin, and a sheet is placed over the coffin. The water pot, taken from beneath the bed, is carried behind the coffin as it is taken out. Water is sprinkled on the floor until the party is out of the house, at which point the pot is broken. The body is carried feet first towards the cemetery. As it is lowered into the grave, the relatives kneel and make obeisance. On the return trip from the cemetery one member of the party is required to carry the sheet and to refrain from looking back.

By the time the funeral party reaches the house the bed has been cleared away for disposal. A white cloth is spread on a mat in one corner of the room. The person bearing the cloth says, as if talking to the deceased, 'There is your seat.'

On the sixth day after death, the person who placed the white cloth for the deceased to sit on, carries a paper umbrella to the cemetery and sticks it into the grave, saying, 'I have come to call you for tomorrow's ceremony.' If the umbrella remains upright it means the deceased will return as requested.

If the umbrella falls down it indicates that the spirit has departed and cannot return. The person who performs this ritual must not talk to anyone en route to the cemetery. 764

On the seventh day a ceremony takes place. The monks come to the house to eat and chant prayers. They are given offerings for their own use and a special tray containing white thread. The monks hold the thread, which symbolizes good, while they chant. The people present are seated before the monks, repeating the prayers and precepts after them. The deceased person is supposed to be sitting on the mat prepared for him and benefiting from this ceremony. Then the people are fed, the monks depart, and the influences of death are considered to be banished. The thread is kept in the house. 764 769

Graves are not visited, nor is there any upkeep of the cemetery, for folk belief has it that the tidying of graves will cause more people to die. The dead are commemorated by the meritorious act of feasting the Buddhist monks.

Associations

Bus Union. Owners of buses plying between Tadagale and Rangoon are organized into a union. In terms of its functions, this organization might be more fittingly termed a mutual protective and insurance association. These are: to prevent outsiders from infringing on their route and competing with them; payment of damages in case of accidents between members' buses and other vehicles or persons; payment of any costs of litigation that arise in connection with accidents; and maintenance of a repair shop and mechanic in the village. Members of the union pay an initial sum to join, plus monthly dues and a small toll fee for each trip that is made. 441 494

Peasants Union. The Tadagale Peasants Union is a constituent body of the All Burma Peasants Union and operates directly under the Insein Division of the parent organization. Some fifty to sixty households in Tadagale are members. When the head of a family or household joins, the union regards all its members as union members. In theory, meetings are supposed to occur once a month, but in fact take place at irregular intervals, whenever a problem arises that is considered sufficiently important to warrant a meeting. Commonly this is a dispute between members over land. If opinion remains divided after considerable discussion of a dispute or other issue, the union meeting votes by written ballot. 467 427 185

The more long-run aims of the Peasants Union concern rent and taxes of cultivators. Protests and petitions are sent to the government when it is felt taxes are too high. The union was characterized as 'an organization that is against the landlords.' At the time of our research, its aim was to reduce the landowners' share of the produce to one-third from two-thirds. The union also favored land nationalization, under which it was believed rent would be paid in a just amount to the government. Just where the Peasants Union fitted in with existing political party programs and alignments in the country at large it was not, for various reasons, feasible to investigate.

Ceremonial Assistance Groups. For purposes of rendering help at such ceremonies as weddings, funerals and initiations, the villagers are divided into informal groups. These are: men's group; married women's group; and unmarried girls' group. The men's group does the heavier tasks, such as chopping and carrying firewood, erecting ceremonial structures, and preparing 575 476

342 In U Myaing's house the lavatory is in the kitchen and is walled off with
514 woven KYU (kind of fiber) mat. There is a hole cut open in the board flooring, and the area underneath this opening also is walled off with woven KYU. U Myaing and family did not take their meals in the kitchen but in the house proper.

361 The PHON-GYI KYAUNG or monastery is located further downstream
368 from the village. It is a two storied brick building comprised of nine
346 rooms, each 6 TAUNG square. Children are not taught here but learn
[672] their lessons at the government school. This school, which is on
[364] YWA-GYI-GET side, teaches pupils up to the tenth standard. Below the PHON-GYI KYAUNG is the cemetery.

The houses in the village are separated one from the other by eight feet on each side. The rows of houses facing the river have porches on
342 both sides. U Myaing's house is typical of those found in the village -
435 some may be more elaborate, some less. His house had been built only
[651] six or seven years, and cost Rs. 3000/- at that time. There are no accounts for each of the separate items and U Myaing does not remember. The land was free and they did not have to pay any revenue on it.
[366] Separate from the houses and on the riverside is a huge platform built
[252] to process fish including the making of NGAPI. U Myaing had no land that he owned round the house, although he could use the land directly in front of the house for various purposes.

U Myaing describes his house as follows;

342 "It is a wooden house, made of wooden posts - a two storied
592 structure. The roof is of slates. Walls are of SHI-NGA-BU wooden boards (boards 8 inches wide and about ½ inch thick) and there are four rooms. Other people have similar houses. It is a LAY-KYA-KYIN (a four-tree-house or a house which has four supporting poles across the frame) and all seven of us live in the house. We drop a kitchen from the back and cook there. The kitchen has three windows at the back, with one door leading into the house. We all live together in three rooms. We keep bedrooms. (U Myaing is speaking of a sketch of the house here). This side is for visitors - there is a room for people who come to buy goods. The
[366] old mother and the children live in one room and I and my wife in another with the smallest child. We eat in the front part of the house in one room at the foot of the sleeping place. There are nine 6 TAUNG rooms without partitions on each of the two floors. The sides of the house are enclosed with timber planks of IN wood, but the bedrooms are also partitioned off. It is very wide and roomy to live in. The floor is made of teak planks."

a bamboo frame extending for about eight feet. The interior of the house contains piles of small boxes in which the bones and ashes of the P.V.O. dead are stored. Consequently no one lives inside. Seven families live under theeaves on three sides of the house along a narrow strip nine feet wide. The area is divided into a number of rooms "6 TAUNG square - the same room size as in the Pathme house." U Myaing's family occupies 2½ such rooms at the corner of the building. The head space varies from 8 feet against the wall of the house to less than two feet at the edges of the eaves. A break in the eaves forms an entrance at the corner. Figuring one room to be equivalent to a 6 foot square room 5½ feet high, we arrive at a total of 315 cubic feet of living space for the 2½ rooms.

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One and a half rooms are covered with a slightly raised bamboo floor on which U Myaing and his family sleep. A space 6' long by 2' wide is used as a work area and for social purposes, but this is not rigorously claimed, since the adjacent family frequently uses it as a storage space. In speaking of the refugee camp quarters U Myaing says:

> "It is very narrow (cramped) here. We eat and sleep in the same place. At Pathme we kept 2 rooms separately to sleep in. Our house there was very wide and roomy. Here we sleep and cook all in one place."

[511]

The sleeping and eating area is separated from the adjacent family by a woven split bamboo partition about 5 feet high; at five feet three inches from the floor, a number of bamboo poles criss-cross to form rafters on which objects are stored.

Here the sleeping mats are rolled up, along with sleeping equipment which consist of U Myaing's wooden pillow, makeshift pillow of rag bundles, 1 holey woolen blanket. One mosquito net used by U Myaing and his wife is also suspended from these rafters. At the far end of the bamboo flooring, there are three baskets. One of these baskets contains the women's clothing; another contains rice. Two clay pots are at the side. The altar consists of a slant board placed on the wall above the sleeping area and equipped with a flower vase. The objects found in the cooking area are: "U" shaped fire area made by 3 bricks touching on edge, bamboo stool for Ma Aye Myaing, hollow bamboo blow tube for starting fire, cooking pots,

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pagodas and those throughout the country are descendants of the pagoda slaves.

Beggars are rated below the pagoda slaves - but, because of the Buddhist merit associated with giving do well for themselves. The beggars live in communities on the outskirts of the town often in cemeteries. They are thought to exhume the dead to get the coins placed in the mouth of the deceased to ensure expenses on his journey to heaven. The wood of the coffin is believed to be used in constructing their huts. Professional undertakers or morticians are regarded with horror since they like the beggars, make their living from the dead. The functions of burial are performed gratis by the entire village. A story is currently going round the University dormitories telling of an immensely wealthy Burmese coffin maker in Rangoon who has offered riches to the young man who will marry his beautiful daughter. When the future seems blank the students' friend advises "Hey, why don't you go and marry the coffin maker's daughter?" It seems that the money would scarcely compensate for the social discrimination. The extent to which the occupation classes are rigid in marriage and other social exchanges is an interesting problem.

A young man is obliged to remain within the occupation class of his family or to rise to greater heights. He is advised at an early age to "be simple, aim high, and tell the truth." When children play at dacoits (thieves) or other "low class" games their parents object to their low aspirations and advise them to play nobles and ministers. One would feel justified in remaining idle rather than accept a position below that of his birth. It is better to accept a clerks job at a low salary than an artisans at a high salary. On the other hand those born into lower status occupation groups tend to be satisfied with their state as a condition of birth. In Rangoon, however, even the hewers may have ambitions to achieve fame and fortune. The opportunities for social mobility is greater in the towns and cities but difinitely restricted in the villages.

Apprenticeship to trades begins at the age of 12 to 14 years, and usually lasts for several years. Ordinarily the youth is attached to the shop of a relative where he lives and is payed a subsistence wage while learning. The key to high positions lies in education in

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or her daughters or sons who are financially well-to-do. U Myaing's sister who lives in Rangoon has given help to the eldest daughter by housing her near her cheroot-rolling job. The pattern of mutual aid among the relatives is strongly developed among the Burmese. "A tree will support a thousand birds" emphasises the importance of the relative who makes good for the rest of the family.

Relationship of Family to Community and State

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A large portion of the Pathwe community were related to U Myaing. Consequently many reciprocal activities fell within the family group. Most of the activities were prescribed by virtue of being a member of the community rather than by kinship ties. Such activities include cooperation in house raisings, funerals, marriage festivals, SHIN PYU ceremonies where the family involved needs help. Unpleasant occasions such as funerals demand everyone's attendance if not financial participation.

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On pleasant occasions the participants are apt to be one's friends and relatives. When someone builds a small house or puts a new thatch roof on, the other villagers come to help. He does not have to pay the workers anything or even feed them. He has only to cook and prepare for them the raw foods and chillies, onions, etc., which each one brings for himself. This statement, however, holds true only when small houses are built. Regular carpenters have to be hired to build the big ones. U Myaing frequently helped to build other people's houses - small houses that could be completed in a day. Help of this nature is offered without asking.

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When a person dies in the village, the villagers all go to the house and certain elders help to bathe and dress the corpse and place it on the bed, where it may be kept anywhere from three to seven days before being taken out and buried. The ground for burial is bought at the ceremony for the price of one pice. Now, in keeping with the general inflation, the price has risen to one anna. The grave is dug by the young men's group. The young men of the village carry the bier, or pull the bullock cart on which the coffin rests, and dig the grave. They also provide the orchestra. For performances on the night of the death and the day after a Burmese orchestra is engaged at the rate of Rs. 50/- to Rs. 100/-. The various visitors who come to condole with

the bereaved bring with them gifts of money and in this way seek to help them to defray the funeral expenses of which the funeral feast held 7 days after the death is most expensive. Sometimes these visitors are so generous that the householder does not need to contribute anything at all. Some people, however, prefer to reserve the right to pay for burial expenses of someone in the family, and put out an announcement requesting neighbours to refrain from making monetary contributions. 764● 621 476

The community activities in the refugee camp are mainly of an economic nature - discussed in the section on "Work". The solidarity of the village is lacking and the feelings of obligation and responsibility beyond the basic economic ones are absent. 621 722

In Pathwe there are ethnic groups other than the Burmese. There are a few Karens, Indians of Madrasi affiliation, as well as a few Chinese who run stores. The attitude of the family toward these other groups are reflected in the following interview: (Note: the concept of "religion" is used here as meaning "general way of life." 621 563 186

Q. "Does U Kyaing know about other religions such as Christianity and Hinduism? If so, what is his attitude towards them.

A. "I don't understand them well. We are with our own religion. We are country folk. We understand our religion only. We don't understand other religions.

Q. "What is your attitude towards other racial groups living in the village?

A. "I don't hold any positive attitude. I harbour no evil thoughts. We hold them to be the same as we are.

Q. "Would you like to go back to live among the Karens you spoke of just now?

A. (D.A.Z.) "Of course not. Lots of Burmese were left behind. We wouldn't dare to live among the Karens."
(U.M.) "Some people do not dare to live among the Karens, but we do."
(D.A.Z.) U.M.)"We don't have enemies."
(D.A.Z.) "There are Karens who are friendly with us."
(U.M.) "Say that we lived together. We lived together."
(D.A.Z.)"Though we have no enemies we feel afraid. In the present turmoil and confusion people no longer know each other."

Q. " Do the Karens differ from you in religion?"

A. (U.M.) "Our religions do not differ. The religion of Karens in our place and our religion do not differ. It is Buddhism."

for an adult and 8 annas for a child."

In camp U Myaing does not play cards very much except when at funerals to pass the night away. His total stakes on such occasions are only about eight annas or a rupee. He has never been to the races, and he never goes about town for fun. He does not go visiting much except when on business. When he does go, he visits Hla Khin, his first cousin who lives in HSIN-MIN-KWET-THIT, and his cousin Ma Sein Maing who lives in Ahlone. In Rangoon there are about 40,000 to 60,000 refugees from Pantanaw district. Sometimes he visits other people whom he knew at the village. However, in a single year his purely social visits to people outside of the camp totals only three visits - one visit each to three houses.

Dr. Orr, Dr. Sheppard, Mr. Shaw and Mr. Musgrave are the only white men he has met. He does not know any other Americans or Englishmen.

U Myaing has not gone to the pagoda once in the present month. During the past month, when he was working at the Jubilee Hall, he used to cross the pagoda platform twice a day going to and coming from his work. In the last year he donated some money at the Shwe Dagon. He gave 2 annas on three occasions four annas on 6 occasions, and once, when he drew his monthly pay, he donated a rupee. Apart from these, he donated money 6 or 7 times during the first one or two months of their arrival, during the time when he was going around selling mats. He gave altogether three or four rupees in these six or seven times.

Only Daw Aw Zar regularly goes to the pagoda solely for the sake of worship and prayer. Ma Aye Myaing has been there about five times on three occasions, but, they were while she was on her way elsewhere, and only once or twice purely for worship. Her total offerings amount to only about a rupee. Daw Aw Zar remarked that they would not have had the opportunity of praying at this great pagoda if they were still in Pantanaw. Daw Aw Zar gives offerings of flowers, money, candles and incense, and goes up the pagoda frequently.

In his worship, U Myaing recites the 5 SILAS. He prays for

The whole family goes to the ANYEIN or marionette shows

which are quite rare and sometimes not even seen in a year. If it is held, 536
it is held during the months of TAGU, KASON and T.ZAUNGMON. In the
villages an ANYEIN gives over at about one or two in the morning.

The people from their village also go over to Karen villages 536
when they have puppet shows at cremation ceremonies. Some of the 764
Karens bury their dead and after three or four years they exhume
the corpse to burn the bones and store the ashes away. At the
ceremony for the cremation of the bones they stage these puppet
shows and the members of U Kyaing's family go to witness them.

In Pathwe the PYAE IT (stage performance or PWE) has not yet made an appearance. Ma Aye 536
Kyaing had seen it in another village where she had to pay an
admission charge of four annas. This was the only time she had seen
it. On that occasion the show was followed by an enactment of one [779]
of the birth stories of Buddha and this went on till morning.

CHILDREN'S GAMES: 524

The children used to play several games. One of these was to 857
blind-fold one of their number and set him off in the direction of
an iron bar suspended about 25 yards away. The blindfolded boy was
given an iron rod and it was his task to try and hit the suspended
bar with his rod.

These games were played at a sports meeting organized for [621]
children and everyone in the village turned out to watch. Another
item was the candle race where the children were given a lighted
candle each and made to run a race. Then there was a cock fighting
contest where two girls sat back on their haunches, faced each other
and began to swing each knee forward alternatively until one or the other
gave up. There was also a needle and thread race, a sack race, a
one-legged race and an egg and spoon race. Each of these races were
confined to only two contestants at a time.

CONKIN:- A CONKIN is the large flat seed
and is used in a game that Burmese children play - U Kyaing's children
included. There have to be ten players, five a side and each side
has to try and hit the seeds belonging to the opposing group according to
complicated rules.

In Pathwe the children used to play marbles and not the youths [369]
as is sometimes found in Rangoon. In Pathwe the adults were all

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
APl Burma
Burmese AP4

888 To the Burmese, long life is a great blessing and an indication of merit earned. Long life is prayed for and old age greatly idealized.

The ideal aged person is one who has successfully reared a family, has grandchildren and a certain amount of material wealth. The aged are expected to be 887 retiring and unobtrusive in their behavior. They do not go out visiting very much; they eat less food; and avoid appearing too well dressed or jeweled when attending religious observances.

An attitude of resignation characterizes the outlook of the aged person in Burmese society. It is unheard of that aged people should work: a possible ex- [622] ception is the village headman, who, it is felt, should be a person of long experience. When aged people live with their children they assume the role of teachers of their grandchildren. Most of the time of elderly people is spent in activities centering around the pagodas and monasteries, organizing of religious festivals, and raising funds for the monks and charities. In fact, they take leading roles in such activities.

The elderly members of the household arise early to see that rice is cooked for the daily offering to the monks and to insure that the household altar is properly looked after. It is preferable for them to arise before dawn, for to do so is considered very meritorious.

[784] Certain of the taboos that apply to younger people, mostly those connected with death, do not apply to the aged.

761 *Death and Funeral Observances.* To the Burmese, the decline of the human body is part of the inevitable course of nature. When this occurs the soul must [775] leave. The butterfly is the symbol of life: when a person dies, "the butterfly leaves his body."

763 When death approaches, valuables, such as jewelry, are removed from the person and the death-bed, because people are reluctant to use anything with which a person dies. These things are given to the monastery. A relative chants as the person is dying, to fix his mind upon the truths of Buddhism and to divert it from worldly goods and ties of kinship.

764 As soon as death has occurred, everyone present cries and wails. Before rigor mortis sets in, relatives bathe the corpse, using a new water pot for the purpose and pouring the water over the body from foot to head, the opposite direction from that practiced by the living. If the water pot must be refilled at all, this [801] must be done an odd number of times. The pot is then put outside the house, upside down, and anyone outside the family of the deceased may take it. Then

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
APl Burma
Burmese AP4

another filled pot is placed underneath the bed of the corpse. The hair of the dead person is dried and spread out, hanging loose. His jacket is put on backwards; his skirt is tucked in at the back instead of the front. The two big toes are tied together, as are the thumbs; the arms are folded on the breast; and the body is covered with a white sheet. Money may also be placed in the mouth. This practice is sometimes attributed to the custom of earlier times when, it is said, bodies were simply abandoned: the belief is that the deceased had to walk to the cemetery, where the grave-digger buried him and took the coins from his mouth in payment.

The corpse must be watched at night; groups take turns at this duty. It is sometimes said that the night watch is kept to prevent malevolent spirits from stealing the body.

Burial occurs according to convenience, when the relatives can gather. While the body lies in state there is open house to those who wish to come to pay their last respects to the deceased. When ready for burial, the body is placed in a wooden coffin with a sheet over the coffin. The water pot, taken from under the bed, is carried behind the coffin as it is taken out. Water is sprinkled on the floor until the party is out of the house, at which point the pot is broken. The body is carried feet first toward the cemetery. As it is lowered into the grave, the relatives kneel and make obeisance. On the return trip from the cemetery one member of the party is required to carry the sheet and to refrain from looking back.

By the time the funeral party reaches the house the bed has been cleared away for disposal. A white cloth is spread on a mat in one corner of the room. The person bearing the cloth says, as if talking to the deceased, "There is your seat."

On the sixth day after death, the person who placed the white cloth for the deceased to sit upon carries a paper umbrella to the cemetery and sticks it into the grave, saying, "I have come to call you for tomorrow's ceremony." If the umbrella remains upright it means the deceased will return as requested. If the umbrella falls down it indicates that the spirit has departed and cannot return. The person who performs this ritual must not talk to anyone en route to the cemetery.

On the seventh day a ceremony takes place. The monks come to the house to eat and there is chanting of prayers. The monks are given offerings for their own use, plus a special tray containing white thread. The monks collectively hold the thread, which is a symbol of good, while they chant. The people present are

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

764 seated before the monks, repeating prayers and precepts after them. The deceased person is supposed to be sitting on the mat prepared for him and benefiting from this ceremony. Then the people are fed, the monks depart, and the influences of death are considered to be banished. The thread is kept in the house.

769 The Burmese do not revisit graves. Nor is there any upkeep of cemeteries, for folk belief has it that the tidying of graves will cause more people to die. The dead are commemorated by the meritorious act of feasting the Buddhist monks.

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TAUNGGYI
SOUTHERN SHAN STATES, BURMA

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

433. PAINTING OF KYAITTIYO PILGRIMAGE.

888

they study their religious books, occupy themselves with their grandchildren, teach them and tell them stories, and make toys for them. They do the light repairs of the house and gear, and when they are too old to go on pilgrimages with the others, they keep the house and tell their beads alone. The veteran can still halt to the shrine on duty-days. Every old man is by courtesy *ludyi*, and every old woman *amèdyí*. The old people wear plainer clothing than the young, and, according to old Burman fashion, less of it. The human dignity of the aged is of a kind that apparel cannot add to. Steeped in the spirit of Buddhism, the aged never yield to anger. Wanting neither for necessaries nor honour, the pathos of their serene old age is purely that of years. A peaceful end is their lot. (See *The Soul of a People*, p. 330.)

[532 788]

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And now our Burman is equipped for the final stage. To the dead of whatever degree royal honours are accorded. The body is spoken of as *aláung*, "that which is about to be," to be something of a higher nature, namely, as the dead are spoken of in German as "blessed." The corpse is laid under a white or royal canopy, upon a temporary bier, for one or several days. The body is swathed in grave-clothes, the thumbs and great toes tied together with strips of white cotton cloth, and in the mouth of a lay person is put a gold or silver piece for *kadôga* —ferry-hire. While the body is lying in state, the catafalque (*daldí*) is being prepared for carrying the bier to the cemetery. The *daldí* is a tall erection of bamboo and paper, ending in a royal *pyatthat*, gay with colours and tinsel. The corpse is laid in a coffin similarly decorated, which is placed in or over the sarcophagus-shaped part of the *daldí*. Above the coffin

434. HOME DEVOTIONS OF THE AGED.

[782]

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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435. THE VETERAN.

floats a *pasô* or *tamîn*, according to the sex of the deceased. Figures of winged *kein-nayâ* support the coffin. All these preparations are costly, but they are never omitted (except in the case of "unripe" deaths), for if the family of the deceased have not the means, the neighbours contribute. While the *dalâ* is preparing, the relatives and neighbours are entertained in a pavilion erected in front of the house. Music, games, and *pwê* are provided by day and by night to help them to pass the time. The Burman word for funeral is *mathâ*, a sorrowing; and the mourning of the relatives is open and loud. Death is spoken of with bated breath and true solemnity. It is not baldly stated that a person is dead, but that their life has ended. The dead are borne in tender memory. Nevertheless, the incidents of the funeral are so inconsistent with mourning that they receive point in a fable. The python snake with its gigantic size and forbidding aspect looks the king of venomous reptiles. And such, according to the satire, the python used to be. So potent was his venom that if he bit so much as the track of a creature it must die. On one occasion the serpent bit the foot-print of a man who had angered him, and crept to the village to enjoy his revenge. But he found nothing there to betoken sorrow. Music was playing and the people were dancing. This mortified him so that he climbed a lofty tree and spat all his venom forth. The preparation of the catafalque and the entertainment of the funeral guests are costly, but the offerings to the *yahân* are the chief expense. These are what give distinction to the funeral. As many *yahân* of the place and the surrounding country as the family can afford to present offerings to, are invited to precede the *cortége* to the cemetery. The offerings are all of identical nature and value. In the illus-

436. ENTERTAINING THE FUNERAL GUESTS.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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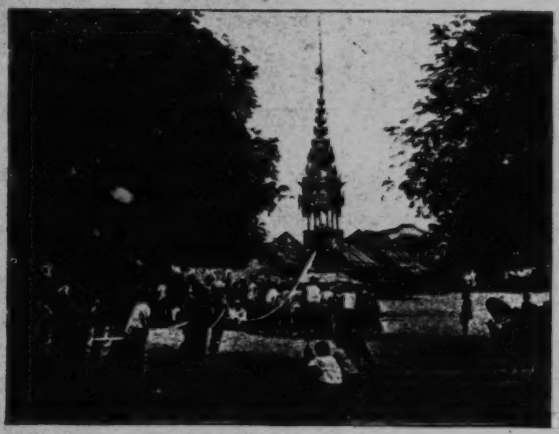


437. THE BIER LEAVING THE HOUSE.

tration, No. 438, there are forty, which cost nine rupees each. It is an honour to receive a share of the offering to bear with the funeral, which the women of the neighbourhood carry. The whole village turns out in *gala* costume; *Lu-dyis* of the highest standing follow the humblest funeral. Even the relatives have no badge of mourning in their apparel. At great funerals, processions of white-robed bearers of the offerings are arranged, and other demonstrations. At noon on the day of the funeral the young men of the quarter raise the catafalque, which they bear on their shoulders. The women place the offerings on their heads, and those who have nothing to carry make believe to drag the bier by long streamers of white cloth, from both ends. The bearers follow their movements with grotesque dancing, allowing the bier sometimes to advance, sometimes to recede, as if its possession were being contested. Where the roads are good enough, the bier is erected on a platform borne on wheels. The Talaings permit no backward movement of the bier, which they consider unlucky; they object to the bearing of a corpse from outside through the village or town. At the base of the catafalque are borne champions who posture in defiant attitudes. The funeral procession is preceded by a band

438. FUNERAL OF A WEALTHY BURMAN.

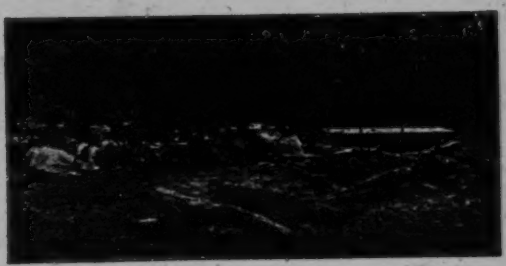
25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

764 playing music as florid in its way as is the decoration of the bier. At the cemetery the pyre has been partly prepared; it is reserved for the relatives to complete it by carrying heavy billets and putting them in place. The coffin is taken down from the catafalque and brought to the pyre, with the head to the West—the direction of the sacred *Bo* tree. The gay catafalque is cast on the

439. THE BIER REACHING THE CEMETERY.

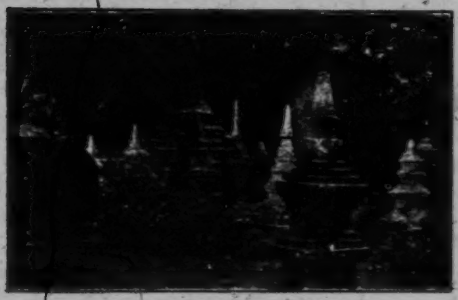
ground, where it is allowed to decay. Before laying the coffin on the wood, it is swayed to and from the pyre seven times, in obeisance before the *Bo* tree. While this is done a sabre is held up with the edge facing the coffin, the signification of which is obscure. The cover is now removed, and the coffin turned over on the pyre and lifted away. Fuel is heaped on the corpse and the fire kindled. The relatives assemble before the *yahán* who have come to the cemetery, and the ceremony of *yezétcha* is performed in respect of the offerings dedicated, which have meanwhile been conveyed to the *kyaung*. All except the relatives return. When the pyre is consumed, the fragments of bones are collected in a vessel and brought to the house of the deceased. Here they are venerated for several months, after which they are deposited in sacred ground (*payá-mye*). Those who can afford it build a cinerárium (*ayó-ó*, Nos. 441, 442).

In the case of earth burial, which is resorted to where fuel is scarce or costly, the seven obeisances are the same; the coffin is opened at the grave (which is about two cubits deep), and the grave-clothes are loosened. The corpse, if that of a man, is inclined towards the left,



440. THE FUNERAL PYRE.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4



441. CINERARIA ON SACRED GROUND.

if of a woman, towards the right. After the coffin has been lowered, the relatives and friends throw on the earth. The chief mourner waves a kerchief and calls on the spirit to return (*leippya-'kaw*); the kerchief is deposited where the corpse had lain in the dwelling, for seven days, when friends are bidden once more. Regular funerals are held when a person has died a death that is looked upon as natural. In the case of violent and other "unripe" deaths the body is buried in haste without any obsequies (p. 188).

Incongruous as are certain of the customs observed at lay-people's funerals, it is at the funerals of the solemn recluses that the boisterous Burman practices reach their climax. When the incumbent of a *kyaung* dies (much less pomp is displayed at the funeral of a sojourner), the body is embalmed, so as to allow of several months being devoted to the preparations for the funeral. The corpse is swathed like a mummy and laid in a solid dug-out coffin of hard wood. Mercury is poured in at the mouth and honey is applied externally. A support for the coffin is made in the form of a *nagá*, raising its head and fiery tongue to guard its trust. Upon the coffin rests an effigy of the deceased. Beneath the *nagá* is a throne (*ballín*), decorated with gilding and colours. Sometimes the whole structure is of glass mosaic (*thdyó*), and subsequently forms part of the catafalque. Such elaborate *daló* are not burned, but brought back to the *kyaung*, where they are kept, although not used again. Over all is a royal canopy of corresponding magnificence, with the *tlhyu* or royal ensign at the four corners. Thus the coffin lies in state in the *kyaung*, or in a special building, it may be during the whole rains, while the *kyaungtagá* is occupied with the

442. THE LAST STAGE.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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443. BIER OF PONDYI.

preparations for the grand funeral ceremony, which is called *pôndyi-kyan*—the *translation* of the *yahán*. The expenses are frequently shared and public contributions flow in. The catafalque is of the same design as the ordinary *daló*, but of several times greater dimensions—fifty to sixty feet high to the *ti* of the *pyatthat*. It is solidly constructed, and braced and strengthened in every direction. At the present day the catafalque is mostly erected on a stout platform on wheels. A long cable proceeds from each end of the carriage to draw it by, and enable it to be controlled where the road descends. It is difficult to manœuvre at the turns of the streets and under the telegraph-wires, although the latter are carried on special posts where they cross the approaches to cemeteries. The *pyatthat* often fails to reach its destination in its original perfection; nevertheless it stands out brilliantly in the grand display, in which it is frequently preceded and followed by subsidiary *pyatthat* erected over carriages which bear the largest offerings to the *kyaungs*. The Myimmo Daung with its denizens (p. 38) is built up on a carriage, others are bright with *nats* and *thadyd*, immense paper models of boats, ships, and steamers, and similar freaks of the *Thadindyut* carnival. Life-size models of white elephants, caparisoned with red and tinsel, move in the procession. Uniform costumes are got ready, and scores of young men are drilled for their parts in the *cortége*. The day is fixed long beforehand, and people throng in from all the neighbouring villages in their brightest silks. The sunny streets are lined with booths, *pwé* are being acted, and bands are playing. At noon the great catafalque begins its progress to the cemetery, drawn by the people, preceded and followed by regiments of masqueraders, endless lines of women carrying offerings, and sight-

444. CINERARIUM OF YAHAN.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

448. PONDYIBYAN.

seers. If the idea be to conjure up the utmost possible contrast to the life of the man who is being honoured, the object could not be more completely attained. When the bier has reached the cemetery, the coffin is not set on a pyre like that of the layman, but is burned in the catafalque, for which purpose the latter has been filled with combustibles. The fire is not lighted in the common way; it is kindled from a distance by means of rockets. These are contributed by different villages or quarters of the town. Each of them backs their rocket for the honour of starting the fire. In Burma Proper the great rockets are sent through the air, guided by rattans to the catafalque. But it is one thing to reach and another to kindle. The Taláing rockets, with the trunks of hard trees, hooped with iron, for barrels, and mounted on stout carriages, are merely aimed at the catafalque. It frequently happens that none of them hits the mark; then the fire is kindled by hand. But the rocket that went nearest has won the day; great sums of money change hands, and as they return home, some people's spirits are higher than ever, while everybody else puts the best face upon it. *Tè pòndyi-byan kaung-dè*—, it was a glorious *pòndyi-byan*, and the *kyaungtagè* will be congratulated upon it as long as he lives. It is as though feelings held in life-long repression had regained the field and were asserting their sway over the passive embodiment of the restraining power. Extremes meet; and herein the secret may lie of the spell Buddhism exerts over Burma, in her serious mood.

448. CINERARIUM OF KING MINDON MIN.

The Burmans are wont to mark the course of life into five stages—first to get strength, then to get knowledge, then

342 of soothsayers (9). Consequently he is naturally
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9. Bedin-saya, derived from Sanskrit, meaning Veda teacher. Judson's Burmese-English Dictionary (Rangoon, 1893), p. 782.

very careful when it comes to the construction of his house. With the aid of the soothsayer the building site must be investigated, the day and hour when to start the construction, and the choice of the timber have to be considered carefully. The shape of the posts, the irregularities of their forms, the knots in the wood where the branches were furnish important clues for the fate of the future occupants. The number of the
342 posts varies in accordance with the size of the
776 house. Usually six posts are erected for the main tract and each post has its own name. One of the posts is considered by most tribes as the seat of the house spirits. In the Burmese house this is the southeastern corner post of the main
●[764] tract. The body of a deceased person is always deposited close to it until the coffin arrives. A coconut always hangs there in honor of the Mahagiri-Nat (Min Magayi), the household spirit /Figure 3--Shan house with leaf roof, Southern Shan State of Mongpai (Burmese: Mobye)/ and the coconut must always be replaced when the milk
342 dries up. To avoid bad luck which spirits, liv-
776 ing inside the wood knots, might threaten, the
777 tops of the posts, or at least every third one, are covered with white or red fabric patches; sometimes for good luck, some Thanaka paste (grated rind of Murraya exotica) is smeared on them. Even the clerics do not seem to be immune
346 to the evil influence of these nature spirits,
776 whose origins date back to pre-Buddhistic times,
777 for these protective coverings of the posts can be observed not only at residential dwellings, guest houses, bridges, etc., but also at religi-